

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH



COUNTY OF SAN BERNARDINO

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First West Nile Virus Case in San Bernardino County

A 71 year old Rancho Cucamonga woman has been hospitalized with the county's first case of West Nile Virus (WNV). It's probable that she was infected during a recent trip to northern California where she remembers getting mosquito bites. She is expected to fully recover. There have been no deaths reported from WNV in the County during 2009, but there was one death in 2008.

Dr. Maxwell Ohikhuare, Health Officer with the San Bernardino County Department of Public Health, said "County residents should take precautions to protect themselves from mosquito bites by applying insect repellent and eliminating all sources of standing water that can support mosquito breeding." He also noted that "positive indicators of WNV have been identified this summer, especially in the west valley and mountain areas of the County, through surveillance of dead birds, and sentinel chicken flocks."

The Department's Mosquito and Vector Control Program continues to perform surveillance activities and treat water sources for mosquito breeding within the County. The ultimate goal of the Program is to protect communities from the spread of West Nile Virus (WNV) through public education, monitoring for its presence, and to reduce mosquito breeding water sources.

WNV is transmitted to humans and animals through a mosquito bite. Mosquitoes become infected when they feed on infected birds.

The most effective ways for individuals to prevent exposure to mosquito bites and WNV are:

- DEET – Apply insect repellent containing DEET, picaradin, oil of lemon eucalyptus or IR 3535 according to label instructions. Repellents keep the mosquitoes from biting you. DEET can be used safely on infants and children 2 months of age and older.
- DRESS – Wear clothing that reduces the risk of skin exposure.

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County Administrative Officer

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- DAWN AND DUSK – Mosquitoes that carry WNV bite in the early morning and evening so it is important to wear repellent at this time. Make sure that your doors and windows have tight-fitting screens to keep out mosquitoes. Repair or replace screens with tears or holes.
- DRAIN – Mosquitoes lay their eggs on standing water. Eliminate all sources of standing water on your property, including flower pots, old car tires, rain gutters and pet bowls. If you have a pond, use mosquito fish or commercially available products to eliminate mosquito larvae.

Most individuals who are infected with WNV will not experience any illness. Individuals 50 years of age and older have a higher chance of getting sick and are more likely to develop serious symptoms when infected with WNV. Recent data also indicate that those with diabetes and/or hypertension are at greatest risk for serious illness.

More information is available at California's WNV Web site – www.westnile.ca.gov. In order to help identify WNV activity, residents are encouraged to report all dead birds and dead tree squirrels on the Web site, or call toll-free 1-877-WNV-BIRD (968-2473).

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